
From: HJR153
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2004 6:26 PM
To: HJR153
Subject: HJR153 - Ernest Beinhart

Name: Ernest Beinhart
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Utility Type: electric
Company Name: HJR 153, Dominion Power
Comments: Dear Virginia State Corporation Commission Members:

I'm writing to you as a past resident of Virginia, and a likely future resident as well. (I still own land near Winchester, and intend to build there eventually.)

I appeal to you not to allow Dominion Power to cut trees from the W&OD Trail for the purpose of installing overhead power transmission towers and lines.

Although I currently live in Silver Spring, Maryland, I regularly travel to northern Virginia to use the W&OD Trail. This public trail is without question one of the "crown jewels" of the entire Washington area. I usually park my car in Herndon and take the trail to Purcellville and back. On every outing, I spend money for food and refreshments in Herndon, Ashburn and Purcellville, plus gasoline, tolls, etc., en route to Herndon.

The very best and most appealing portion of the W&OD Trail's entire 45-mile length is the portion between Leesburg and Purcellville--specifically because it is still overhung with trees, shaded in the summer, and in many ways still "natural" despite the galloping development on both sides of the narrow NVRPA parkway. It is a pure pleasure to travel this stretch.

There's a huge disparity in the "quality of experience" available on the trail west of Leesburg (where the trail remains enclosed in nature) and east of Leesburg (where the trailsides have been cleared for power lines). East of Leesburg, trailgoers bake in the sun--there's no shade--while looking directly at rows of townhouses and warehouses for long stretches. From Leesburg to Purcellville, through the trees, it is so much better--there is still a natural environment, and no power transmission lines...yet.

I hope you will not allow the trees to be cut away from the W&OD trailsides.

If you allow this to happen, the loss in quality of life will be permanent--the jewel will be gone, it cannot be recovered later for future generations. Increasingly crowded suburbanites (and urbanites and Marylanders, too) need the solace of the "natural" W&OD Trail. (Man cannot live by kilowatts alone, to borrow a phrase...or gigawatts or whatever.)

I'm not an engineer, thus cannot speak to the relative merit of alternate routes or means of electric transmission. Of course electricity is essential, and it must be moved. But the value of a "natural" W&OD Trail is already high, and is certain to rise as the population on both sides of it becomes more dense.

Preserving the W&OD trail for the long term would seem to justify almost any alternative means or route, even one that may cost more in the short term.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest Beinhart
4003 Gannon Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902